

- Bill Removes Sweetheart Deals, Improves New Law -

Washington, DC - U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) voted tonight to pass key improvements to the newly enacted health insurance reform law. The reconciliation bill, which now goes to the President for his signature, makes health care even more affordable for the middle class, lowers prescription drug costs for seniors by closing the "donut hole" over time, and reduces the deficit more than did the original bill. The bill passed by a vote of 220 to 207.

The package of improvements, which passed the House and Senate today, stripped out special "sweetheart" deals that favored one state over another. The much talked about "Cornhusker Kickback" is stripped and replaced with a provision to help every state manage the cost of Medicaid. The replacement provision is estimated by the State of New York to add more than \$1 billion a year to the state's coffers. Provisions that would have favored Florida and North Dakota were stripped as well.

"Tonight's legislation strengthens the recently passed health insurance reform law," Rep. Hall said. "It strengthens protections for seniors, cuts out sweetheart deals and helps correct our nation's budget deficit."

Health insurance reform will improve the lives of Hudson Valley residents in a real, significant way. Just within the 19th Congressional District this legislation will:

- Improve coverage for 523,000 residents with health insurance.
- Give tax credits and other assistance to up to 92,000 families and 18,700 small businesses to help them afford coverage.
- Improve Medicare for 97,000 beneficiaries, including closing the donut hole.
- Extend coverage to 12,000 uninsured residents.
- Guarantee that 7,900 residents with pre-existing conditions can obtain coverage.
- Protect 800 families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.
- Allow 51,000 young adults to obtain coverage on their parents' insurance plans.
- Provide millions of dollars in new funding for 15 community health centers.
- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers by \$26 million annually

"This legislation will dramatically benefit Hudson Valley residents," Rep. Hall said. "These votes are the most important votes I've taken in office, and I am proud to have an opportunity to help create real change for the better."

The reconciliation bill now goes to President Obama for his signature. Once signed, it will modify the reform legislation the President signed Tuesday.